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FROM : Amembassy, Moscow

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DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

December 12, 1955

REF :

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SUBJECT: Contacts Between Soviet Citizens and Foreigners in USSR

In view of the current interest in East-West contacts and the Soviet attitude thereto, the Embassy is reporting the following incidents involving two Scandinavian governesses, employed by members of the staff of this Embassy. The young ladies in question were recently escorted by two American correspondents to the Novy Yar, the newly-opened "night-club"-restaurant in the Sovietskaya Hotel. While there, a young Soviet citizen (who turned out to be a student at the University of Moscow) asked if he could join the group. He was polite and sober, and soon engaged the girls in a lively conversation about Western jazz. (The student spoke English reasonably well.) He stated that he was a regular listener to the VOA program, "Music, USA", and according to one of the governesses, knew more about Swedish jazz bands than she did.

After a short while, a waiter approached the young Soviet and told him that someone wished to see him outside the restaurant. When the student returned, he excused himself, saying that he could no longer sit at their table. As he departed, he leaned down and muttered: "What a system."

A similar incident occurred at the Novy Yar about a week ago. On this occasion, one of the governesses, escorted by a visiting Englishman, was joined by a young Soviet. After a short period of friendly conversation (in French), this youth was also called out of the restaurant and upon returning likewise stated that he was sorry but that he could not remain at the table.

The governesses observed that the Soviet youths involved were well-behaved and that "political subjects" were not touched on in the conversation with them.

While the Embassy does not wish to attach undue significance to these incidents, they do raise the possibility that the management of the Novy Yar is now under instructions to discourage impromptu contacts between Soviet citizens and foreigners. In this connection, the Embassy notes that the Novy Yar is Moscow's closest equivalent to a Western "night-club", and that it is frequently attended by foreign visitors to this city.

For the Ambassador:

John C. Guthrie
First Secretary of Embassy

CGStefan:gm
REPORTER

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